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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-03 L-03 NSC-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00

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R 251500Z JUN 75
FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4055
INFO AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SANTO DOMINGO 2814

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, DR
SUBJ: ASSESSMENT OF MILITARY RESIGNATIONS: SIX WEEKS AFTER

SUMMARY

THE MAY 9 RESIGNATIONS OF THE COUNTRY'S FOUR RANKING MILITARY OFFICERS CREATED A CRISIS SITUATION FOR THE BALAGUER GOVERNMENT, WHICH HAS NOW BEEN VIRTUALLY RESOLVED. AT THIS JUNCTURE, THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CONSEQUENCES MAY BE IDENTIFIED AS FOLLOWS: THE PRESIDENT HAS EMERGED STRENGTHENED FROM THIS CONFRONTATION; GREATER BALANCE HAS BEEN RESTORED IN THE ARMED FORCES; THE RIVAL PERSONALISTIC CLIQUES INTHE ARMED FORCES HAVE BEEN PLAYED OFF ONE AGAINST THE OTHER WHILE OFFICERS BEHOLDEN TO THE PRESIDENT HAVE BEEN APPOINTED TO KEY POSITIONS; THE POLITICAL PARTIES HAVE PROVED TO BE MARGINAL INA POWER CONFRONTATION. IN THE LONGER RUN, THE READJUSTMENT OF THE MILITARY BALANCE OF POWER MAKES IT MORE DIFFICULT TO PREDICT WHO WILL TAKE POWER WHEN BALAGUER LEAVES OFFICE. END SUMMARY

1. ON MAY 9, THE SECRETARY OF STATE OF THE ARMED FORCES AND THE CHIEFS OF STAFF OF THE ARMY, NAVY AND AIR FORCE RESIGNED IN PROTEST AGAINST THE PRESIDENT'S MAY 7 APPOINTMENT OF THEIR ARCH RIVAL, MAJOR GENERAL NEIT NIVAR SEIJAS, AS CHIEF OF POLICE. THE SURPRISE RESIGNATION OF THESE FOUR RANKING OFFICERS, WHO
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WERE REFERRED TO AS THE PEREZ Y PEREZ FACTION BECAUSE OF THE

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PRIMACY WITHIN THE GROUP OF ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF MAJOR GENERAL ENRIQUE PEREZ Y PEREZ, VIVIDLY HIGHLITED THE SERIOUS RIVALRY BETWEEN NIVAR AND OTHER TOP LEVEL ARMED FORCES LEADERS. (CURRENT INDICATIONS ARE, HOWEVER, THAT THIS REFLECTS A CLASH OF PERSONALITIES MORE THAN INSTITUTIONAL DIVISION WITHIN THE MILITARY.) IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF SIX WEEKS LATER, THE MAIN CONSEQUENCES OF THE RESIGNATIONS MAY BE MORE CLEARLY IDENTIFIED:

A. PRESIDENT BALAGUER'S POSITION VIS-A-VIS THE MILITARY IS STRONGER THAN EVER, AND HIS GENERAL LEADERSHIP STATUCE HAS BEEN REINFORCED. BY REFUSING TO REMOVE NIVAR AS CHIEF OF POLICE, BY IMMEDIATELY ACCEPTING THE PROFFERED RESIGNATIONS, AND BY PROMPTLY NAMING OFFICERS PERSONALLY LOYAL AND BEHOLDEN TO HIM TO FILL THE VACANCIES, THE PRESIDENT DEMONSTRATED HIS SELF-CONTROL, POLITICAL SKILLS AND FREEDOM OF ACTION. THOSE WHO BELIEVED THAT THE PEREZ Y PEREZ FACTION COULD DICTATE TO THE PRESIDENT WERE PROVEN WRONG.

B. PRE PRESIDENT RESTORED GREATER BALANCE TO THE MILITARY LEADERSHIP, WHICH HAD COME INCREASINGLY UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE PEREZ Y PEREZ FACTION. WHEREAS THE FORMER LEADERSHIP HAD SEEMED TO BE EMERGING AS A COORDINATED PRESSURE GROUP, THE PRESENT ALIGNMENT IS MORE IN THE BALAGUER TRADITION OF AN EQUILIBRIUM AMONG VARIOUS MILITARY LEADERS:

(1) THE POWER AND INFLUENCE OF CHIEF OF POLICE GENERAL NEIT NIVAR SEIJAS HAS BEEN ENHANCED BUT WITHIN GENERAL LIMITS IMPOSED BY THE PRESIDENT. NIVAR IS ONCE AGAIN IN THE PUBLIC EYE AS POLICE CHIEF AND HAS A COMMAND INSTEAD OF A STRICTLY CIVILIAN POSITION. THE PRESENT ARMED FORCES LEADERSHIP, HEADED BY SECRETARY OF STATE OF THE ARMED FORCES JUAN RENE BEAUCHAMPS JAVIER, WILL HAVS A MORE COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CHIEF OF POLICE THAN PREVIOUSLY, GENERAL NIVAR REPORTEDLY FEELS THAT HE IS "UP" AND THAT PEREZ Y PEREZ IS "DOWN," A CIRCUMSTANCE WHICH MAKES HIM MORE BEHOLDEN THAN EVER TO HIS BENEFACTOR, BALAGUER. AT THE SAME TIME, THE PRESIDENT HAS RESTRAINED NIVAR FROM CARRYING HIS VINDICTIVENESS AGAINST THE PEREZ FACTION TOO FAR (SD 2177).

(2) TWO OF FOUR RESIGNED OFFICERS HAVE BEEN REINTEGRATED
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INTO THE BALAGUER ADMINISTRATION BY APPOINTMENT TO SENIOR, BUT LARGELY CEREMONIAL, POSITIONS IN THE GOVERNMENT (GENERAL PEREZ Y PEREZ AS SECRETARY OF INTERIOR AND POLICE, AND COMMODORE JIMENEZ AS SECRETARY OF FOREIGN RELATIONS) (SD 2473). HOWEVER, THEIR INFLUENCE AND IMPORTANCE HAVE BEEN DECREASED. THEY ARE UNABLE TO PROTECT MANY OF "THEIR PEOPLE": A NUMBER OF HIGH LEVEL STAFF OFFICER ANS COMMANDERS CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH THEM HAVE BEEN TRANSFERRED TO LESS IMPORTANT POSITIONS

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AND REPLACED BY THOSE LOYAL TO THE INCUMBENT LEADERSHIP. EVEN THOUGH THE PRESIDENT IS ABLE TO USE THEIR PRESENCE IN THE GOVERNMENT AS A COUNTERBALANCE AGAINST THE ASPIRATIONS OF GENERAL NIVAR, THEIR REMOVAL FROM COMMAND POSITIONS HAS EFFECTIVELY NEUTRALIZED THEM, AT LEAST FOR THE PRESENT.

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(3) THE MOST IMPULSIVE OF THE FOUR WHO RESIGNED, EX-AIR FORCE CHIEF OF STAFF GENERAL SALVADOR LLUBERES MONTAS, HAS BEEN LEFT WITHOUT AN ASSIGNMENT, AS HAS EX-NAVY CHIEF OF STAFF LOGRONO. REPORTEDLY BALAGUER WISHES TO MAKE KNOWN HIS DISPLEASURE WITH LLUBERES, WHOM HE CONSIDERES "NO FRIEND OF MINE." BY MAINTAINING LLUBERES IN LIMBO, BALAGUER NOT ONLY PUNISHES THE GENERAL BUT ALSO MAY BE TRYING TO SPLIT HIM OFF FROM PEREZ Y PEREZ AND JIMENEZ, WHO HAVE BEEN GIVEN ASSIGNMENTS. ALTHOUGH LLUBERES HAS SOME FOLLOWING OF HIS OWN HE HAS LITTLE ROOM FOR MANEUVER TO REGAIN A POSITION OF INFLUENCE; HE IS CAPABLE, HOWEVER, OF SOME IMPETUOUS ACT IN OPPOSITION TO THE PRESIDENT.

C. THE POLITICAL PARTIES DEMONSTRATED THEIR MARGINALITY. THEY WERE CONSULTED SEEMINGLY ONLY AS AN AFTERTHOUGHT BY BOTH BALAGUER AND THE RESIGNED OFFICERS. MOST PARTIES AND POLITICANS, UNDERSTANDING THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE SITUATION, REFUSED TO TAKE A STAND, FEARING THE CONSEQUENCES OF SUPPORTING THE LOSING SIDE (SD A-51).

2. WHILE THE POLITICAL-MILITARY RELATIONS RESULTING FROM THE

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RESIGNATIONS ARE NOW SOMEWHAT CLEARER, THE MORE IMPORTANT QUESTION OF WHAT ROLE THE MILITARY WILL PLAY WHEN BALAGUER LEAVES THE PRESIDENCY IS MORE OBSCURE. IN THE PRE-RESIGNATION PERIOD IT WAS WIDELY BELIEVED THAT PEREZ Y PEREZ AND ASSOCIATES WOULD TAKE OVER THE GOVERNMENT, EITHER FORMALLY OR AS BEHIND-THE-SCENE
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RULERS, WHEN BALAGUER LEFT OFFICE. THE PREVAILING VIEW NOW IS THAT THE PRESIDENCY IS UP FOR GRABS, ONCE BALAGUER GOES, THOUGH THERE IS A CONTINUED, WIDESPREAD BELIEF THAT A MILITARY-BACKED GOVERNMENT WILL FOLLOW. OBSERVERS ARE DIVIDED, HOWEVER, AS TO WHETHER IT WILL BE PEREZ, NIVAR OR PERHAPS A "THIRD FORCE" OF MILITARY OFFICERS WHO WILL FILL THE POWER VACANCY. THE PRESIDENT CONTINUES TO MANAGE THE MILITARY ON A PERSON-TO-PERSON BASIS, THEREBY AVOIDING AN INSTITUTIONAL CONFRONTATION. TO DATE, THERE HAS BEEN NO MANIFESTATION OF ANY STRONG DIVISIVE FORCES WITHIN THE BODY OF THE ARMED FORCES, DESPITE THE INTENSIVE PERSONAL RIVALRY BETWEEN NIVAR AND THE PEREZ FACTION.
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